



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Virginia State Board of Social Services announces new officers *Nettie Simon-Owens of Halifax will serve as chair*

Richmond – Nettie Simon-Owens of Halifax County has been elected to serve as chair of the State Board of Social Services for the Virginia Department of Social Services. Her term as chair began July 1, 2007. Simon-Owens is the director of workforce development for the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center in South Boston.

“We are delighted that Ms. Simon-Owens will continue serving on the board,” said Anthony Conyers Jr., VDSS commissioner. “Her experience and guidance have been central to the direction the board has taken over the last few years.”

The State Board of Social Services consists of nine members appointed by the governor. The board is designed to include members from each region of the commonwealth. Simon-Owens was originally appointed to represent Virginia’s Southside and Piedmont areas by former Governor Mark Warner in 2004 and has served as vice-chair for the past year.

“It is an honor serving on the State Board of Social Services. As incoming chair, I look forward to working collaboratively with my fellow board members, Commissioner Conyers, staff and others to ensure promulgation of regulations that support and enhance services provided by our local agencies, protect our most vulnerable citizens and positively impact the lives of the citizens and communities served,” said Simon-Owens.

Simon-Owens will chair the board and continue to represent her region, which includes Mecklenburg, Halifax, Pittsylvania, Henry, Franklin, Roanoke, Bedford, Campbell, Charlotte, Appomattox, Craig, Botetourt, Amherst, Rockbridge, Alleghany, Bath, Highland, Nelson, Albemarle, and Augusta Counties and the cities of Danville, Martinsville, Roanoke, Lynchburg, and Waynesboro.

Previously, Simon-Owens worked as coordinator of workforce services for Danville Community College. She also worked in manufacturing for several years at Philip Morris, U.S.A. in Richmond and Clover Yarns, Inc. in Halifax. Born in Albany, NY, Simon-Owens grew up on a tobacco farm and is a graduate of Halifax County High School, Virginia State University,

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Howard University and Averett University. She lives with her husband, Edward Owens, in South Boston, and is the daughter of Annie Simon and the late Winfred Simon Sr. of Clover.

Responsibilities of the board include providing guidance and advice to the VDSS commissioner on matters that arise throughout the social services system. The board investigates questions and provides updates, findings and recommendations to the governor or commissioner. The board also adopts regulations as may be necessary and examines potential fiscal impact of such regulations on local boards.

Board members are chosen based on qualifications that demonstrate each member's suitability to consider and act upon the various needs and decisions within the board's area of responsibility.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Home Office is located in Richmond and administers social services programs, consistent with federal and state law and policy of the State Board of Social Services through 120 local departments of social services throughout the Commonwealth. The VDSS mission is "People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities." For more information, visit www.dss.virginia.gov.

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